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A

DISCOURSE,

ON THE

HISTORY

OF THE

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

IN

MARBLEHEAD;

DELIVERED TO HIS PEOPLE

JANUARY 7, 1816,

BY SAMUEL DANA, A. M.
FIFTH PASTOR OF SAID CHURCH.

BOSTON:
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1816.

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At a meeting of the Standing Committee of the First Religious Society in Marblehead, Jan. 18, 1816.

Voted—That Richard Prince Esq. and Doctor Calvin Briggs, be desired to wait on Rev. Mr. Dana, to thank him for the Historical Sermons preached by him on the 7th inst. and request a copy of them for the press.

STEPHEN SWETT, *Clerk.*

B.P.L.
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Mar. 15. 1889

THOSE who heard this discourse, as it was delivered in two parts, will perceive that it has been considerably abridged, in order that it might be reduced even to its present form; for which an apology, it is presumed, is unnecessary. It has received no other material alteration. To the members of the Church and Society, for whose information and benefit it was particularly designed, and to the other gentlemen of the town, who have kindly expressed an interest in the publication, it is now affectionately inscribed.—

Marblehead, January 22, 1816.

DISCOURSE.

PSALM lxxvii, 10, 11, 12.

But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

IN this passage, and the verses with which it stands connected, the devout psalmist, referring either to personal trials, to publick evils, or to both of them combined, appears to be describing his unbelieving despondency, and the method he adopted to procure relief. "I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah. Thou holdest mine eyes waking; I am so troubled that I cannot speak.—*I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.* I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search. Will the Lord cast off forever? And will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah. And I said, This is my infirmity: but *I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings?*"

A similar resolution becomes us, my hearers, at a period, when, if we are friends of Zion, we cannot but feel concern and dismay in view of her waste places, and her mourning, in the midst of us. I have, indeed, been long contemplating a

discourse, on "the days of old, and the years of ancient times," "the years of the right hand of the Most High," with a special reference to the history of this ancient Church and Society. Such a discourse may not only be interesting, and useful by preserving the remembrance of many dates, facts, and circumstances, which ought to be retained and might otherwise be lost, but may serve to animate our hearts under every discouragement, and to excite an increase of that zeal and solicitude, to maintain, in their primitive purity, the religion, worship, and ordinances of Jehovah, for which our ancestors were so highly distinguished.—The subject was judged to be not unsuitable for the first sabbath of the revolving year.

I rely therefore on your attention and candour, while I attempt a detailed account, of the origin of this christian church, and of the most prominent events and circumstances, which have marked its continuance to the present time.

This design may be introduced, with advantage, by a very cursory survey of the puritans, the fathers of New-England—their noble, apostolick spirit, their almost unequalled sufferings, and the wonders of divine providence, which were wrought for their deliverance, increase, and prosperity.

Persecuted for righteousness' sake, and cruelly oppressed with ecclesiastical usurpation, in their native land, they made immense sacrifices for their religion, and first emigrated, in 1607, to Holland, where they hoped to enjoy the unmolested worship of God, "*thoroughly* reformed; that is, purged from all those inventions, which had been brought into the church since the age of the apostles, and reduced entirely to the scripture standard." In the course of a few years, however, it was found, that the general moral complexion of that country, as well as more particularly the prevailing profanation of the sabbath there, would render the situation a snare to the young, and prove unfavourable to the grand object, which they esteemed paramount to every other. Directing, therefore, their attention to the new world, after long

and devout consultation, they adopted the heroick resolution, of seeking an asylum for themselves and their religion in these remote and savage wilds: and finally, with undaunted perseverance, having surmounted the most appaling difficulties and perils, they reached the harbour of Cape Cod, on the tenth of November, 1620, and at Plymouth commenced the settlement of New-England.

The number which landed was but an hundred and one souls. "Their situation," says the historian, "was truly distressing, and their prospects discouraging. Wherever they turned their eyes, trouble was before them. Fatigued by their long and boisterous voyage—arrived on a dangerous and inhospitable shore, in the advance of a cold winter—surrounded with hostile barbarians, without any hope of human succour in case of an attack—denied the aid or favour of the court of England—without a patent—without a publick promise of a peaceable enjoyment of their religious liberties—worn out with toil and sufferings, and without convenient shelter from the inclemency of the weather—such was the situation, and such the prospects, of these pious, solitary pilgrims. To increase their distresses, a general mortal sickness prevailed among them, which swept off forty-six of their number before the opening of the spring. To support them under these trials, they had need of all the aids and comforts, which christianity affords—and these were sufficient. They bore their hardships with uncommon patience, and persevered in their pilgrimage with such resignation and calmness, as gave proof of great piety and unconquerable virtue."

These were with emphasis "the years of the right hand of the Most High;" for he, in whom they trusted, would not permit the sword of the wilderness to devour, or cold, or hunger, or sickness, utterly to destroy, the little company, who, as they solemnly declared, "had undertaken the voyage for the glory of God, and the advancement of the christian faith." Accordingly, they were very signally preserved; additions from time to time were made to them of their brethren; the

Spirit of the Lord was poured forth; and the wilderness soon became a fruitful field. "In *twenty-seven* years, there were *forty-three* churches in joint communion, and in *twenty-seven* years more, there were upwards of *eighty* churches, composed of known, pious, and faithful professors."

That the pilgrims, who thus laid the foundation of this part of our populous republick, were eminent christians, valiant for the truth, and full of piety and good works, though by no means exempt from the errours and imperfections of our fallen nature, there is abundant evidence. "Having adopted the Assembly's Catechism and Confession, as the substance of their creed,* they steadily aimed at the utmost purity of doctrine and discipline, in order to maintain and promote the power of godliness."—It has been observed, that "there was never perhaps before seen, such a body of pious people, on the face of the earth. For those who came over first, came hither for the sake of religion, and for that pure religion, which was entirely hated by the loose and profane of the world. Both their civil and ecclesiastical leaders, were exemplary patterns of piety. They encouraged only the virtuous and good to come with and follow them, and were so strict on the vicious, both in the church and state, that the incorrigible could not endure to live in the country and returned." It was a memorable saying of a distinguished minister, in the British Parliament, respecting New-England at this period—"I have lived in a country seven years, and in all that time I never heard one profane oath; and in all that time I never did see a man drunk in that land."

* "When there was a Synod assembled at Cambridge, Sept. 30, 1648, even that Synod which framed, agreed to, and published the Platform of Church Discipline, there was a most unanimous vote passed in these words:—This Synod having perused and considered with much gladness of heart and thankfulness to God, the *Confession of Faith*, published by the late Reverend Assembly in England, do judge it to be very holy, orthodox, and judicious, in all matters of faith, and do therefore freely and fully consent thereunto for the substance thereof. And we do therefore think it meet that this Confession of Faith, should be commended to the churches among us, as worthy of their due consideration and acceptance."

[*Mather's Magnalia*, B. v, P. i, Sec. v.]

The way is now prepared for the commencement of our own history.

On the twenty-ninth of June, 1629, two hundred persons, with the Rev. Messrs. Skelton, Higginson, and Bright, arrived at Naumkeag, now Salem; one half of whom removed the same year to Charlestown—Messrs. Skelton and Higginson remaining with the rest at Salem, where they formed, and were ordained over, the most ancient church in the most ancient town of Massachusetts, as distinct from Plymouth. At this time, the whole colony of New-England consisted of only three hundred souls. The first town was incorporated the same year, twenty years before the incorporation of Marblehead, whose inhabitants, in the interim, belonged to Salem. It is not improbable that the first settlers here, constituted part of the above mentioned church, when it was formed; with that church, however, it is certain that those of this place, who were communicants, continued to be connected, till the thirteenth of August, 1684, the date of our establishment as a distinct organized church; though previously, for not less than thirty-six years, there had been preaching here, by a Mr. Walton, and by Mr. Cheever, who at length became the first pastor.

From the earliest records of this town,—which for a great number of years have been mislaid, but are just come to light,—it appears, that as early as 1648, when "the plantation," as it was called, contained forty-four families,* there was preaching among them by Mr. Walton; as is evident from the following curious extract—"October 8, 1648. At a

* "James Smith and Rowland, Samuel Doliber, Edmund Nicolson and Francis, John Gatchell, William Barber, David Thomas, John Legg, Peter Pitford, Erasmus James, Thomas Bowinge, John Stacie, George Chine, John Northy, Nicolas Merret, Thomas Pitman, Timothy Allen, Thomas Sams, Arthur Sanden, Isaac Allerton, Moses Maverick, Mr. Walton, John Lion, Henry Stacie, William Chichester, and Samuel Corwithen, David Corwithen, Thomas Gray, Richard Norman, John Peachy, Richard Curtice, John Hart, William Charles, John Deveroe, Abraham Whitcare, John Peach senr. John Bartoll, Joseph Doliber, Robert Knight, John Bennet, Francis Johnson Walsingham, John Norman, William Luskis, Christopher Latimore, John Goyt."

town meeting it was agreed on, that there might be an equal way of maintaining the ordinance by Mr. Walton, that there should be a *rate* made, whereby every inhabitant should be rated, according to equity; as also strangers, as have benefit by the plantation, by fishing, and make use of wood and timber, and enjoy the benefit of the ordinance, should be rated according to the discretion of the raters; also, to add to every man's rate, eighteen pence for Mr. Walton's wood:—and it is agreed that Mr. Walton should have for this year the sum of *forty* pounds." Of Mr. Walton little is known; but it is exceedingly gratifying to find, how early, and how liberally, the first settlers made provision for the dispensation of the gospel among them, when they were few and small. For it further appears from the same records, that so late as 1660, there had been but *fifteen or sixteen* houses built,* and that so late as 1674, the number of persons called householders, did not exceed *an hundred and fourteen*, whose names are all registered.† Mr. Walton continued to officiate as a publick teacher, though without ordination, about *twenty* years, till he was removed by death, in August or September 1668,‡ but a few weeks before the commencement of Mr. Cheever's labours.

* "All those 15 or 16 houses, which were built in Marblehead before the year 1660, shall be allowed one cow's common and a half."

† Names not contained in the preceding list: John Waldern, William Woods, Thomas Rose, William Nick, John Codnar, Elias Henly, Roger and Lot Conant, Mr. Samuel Cheever, Thomas Smith, James Dennis, William Bartoll, Mark Pitman, Mr. Samuel Ward, Mr. Ambrose Gale, Mr. Richard Knott, Samuel Cundy, Matthew Clarke, Thomas Cawly, William Waters, John Roads, Henry Trevett, William Beal, Stephen Griggs, Thomas Dixie, Benjamin Parmiter, Edward Read, Samuel Morgan, Mr. William Brown, Capt. Corwinge, Mr. Thaddeus Reddan, Mr. William Bartholomew, Mr. William Pitt, Richard Reed, John Brimblecom, Richard Hanniford, Henry Russell, Thomas Treuy, Dinson Stilson, Richard Reith, Samuel Reed, Thomas Tainor, Edward Homan, Thomas Ellis, Edward Damon, Nicolas Fox, Thomas Pousland, Thomas White, Thomas Dod, Robert Houper, John Houper, John Pedrick, Elias Fortune, John Martin, Francis Godlar, John Tribby, George Peach, Andrew Tucker, Robert Bartlett, Richard Crocker, George Bondfield, Mr. William Pow, John Harris, George Godfrey, John Hoyle, Alexander Gilligan, John Williams, William Poat, George Darling, James Watts, William Lightfoot, Philip Harding, Widow Boatson, Robert Johnson, Samuel Walton, John Marriott.

‡ "1668. 30 December, The inhabitants being warned to a town meeting, by the worshipful Maj. William Hathorne and the Rev. Mr. John Higginson, who

Let me now invite your particular attention, to the interesting circumstances attending the establishment of this church, and the solemn consecration of its first pastor, as we find them minutely detailed in our own records.

"May 24, 1684. The brethren at Marblehead, finding a great inconveniency in going to Salem," with the unanimous concurrence of the congregation, "applied themselves to Mr. Samuel Cheever, who had been their minister among them for fifteen years and a half past, that he would take the office of a pastor, and themselves might be congregated into a particular society, for the enjoyment of all the ordinances in this place, orderly, as in other towns and places in the country." On the ninth of July following, Mr. Cheever "expressed his willingness to serve his generation by the will of God, and to give up himself to that particular service, so long as peaceably and with a good conscience, according to his best knowledge of the mind of God in his word, he could discharge such an office among them." A fast having been first solemnized, "calling in the help and advice of the neighbouring churches, by their elders and messengers, viz. Salem, Ipswich, Lynn, and Beverly, the church was congregated on the thirteenth of August; the *fifty-four* persons, whose names are subjoined, uniting together in this following *Confession*, and *Covenant*, and Samuel Cheever ordained their pastor; Mr. Higginson, of Salem, giving him his charge, and Mr. Hubbard of Ipswich the right hand of fellowship, and both them, with Mr. Hale of Beverly, laying on of hands;

were desired by the honoured court at Salem to hear and advise with Mrs. Walton and the inhabitants, concerning what he was to have for the year '67, and the year '68, so long as he lived—the general vote passed, that for the year '67, it stood as formerly voted at fifty pounds, and for the year '68, as long as he lived, about eight months, Mrs. Walton was to have thirty-five pounds."

Further extracts. "1658, It is agreed, by a general consent of the inhabitants, that the passage between Marblehead and Salem, shall be two pence for the inhabitants of Marblehead, and whosoever keeps the ferry, shall provide a sufficient ferry-boat."

"1664," five men were chosen, "to meet the men of Salem, to *lay out the high roads* between Salem and Marblehead."

the whole work countenanced with the presence of the Deputy Governour, with five of the assistants, and twenty elders, with other ministers, and young scholars, and many others."

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

"1. We believe in one God, the eternal Jehovah, infinite in wisdom, power, holiness, goodness, and truth, the Foreordainer, Creator, and Governor of all things, distinguished into three persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, having all of them the same godhead, power, and eternity.

"2. The Lord made man at first in his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; from which estate man falling, by transgressing the law of his creation, all his posterity are corrupted in their whole nature, averse to all good, and strongly inclined to all evil, from whence do proceed all actual transgressions, which bind men over to death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

"3. God, out of his mere mercy, hath ordained his Son, the Lord Jesus, to be the Redeemer of man, by the execution of his Prophetical, Priestly, and Kingly offices; who, being truly God, took man's nature on him, yet without sin, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered in that nature the death of the cross, to ransom the elect, was buried, and rose from the dead with the same body, with which also he ascended into heaven, where, sitting at the right hand of God, he makes intercession for them that believe on him, and from thence shall return to judge the world at the last day.

"4. In the new covenant, made by God with his people, the Holy Spirit of God works faith and repentance, and dwells with and in all such, who are truly drawn to Christ; who, being united to him, are in this life pardoned, and accounted righteous, adopted, in their whole man sanctified, shall persevere to the end, and at last in heaven shall be eternally glorified.

"5. God hath given unto man the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, to be the only perfect, sufficient, and perpetual rule of his faith and life; not abolishing but establishing the law, as a rule of righteousness for christians to walk by, promising to accept of sincere obedience to the law and gospel, through Christ, when such as live and die unbelieving, impenitent, and disobedient, shall suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.

"6. All true believers make up that one body, the church, of which Christ is Head; who, for the gathering in and perfecting of the saints, hath appointed the word, prayer, baptism, and the Lord's supper, the ministry, officers, and discipline in particular churches; and therefore it is the duty of every christian to attend carefully thereunto."

CHURCH COVENANT.

"We do, in the presence of the eternal God, under the sense of our great unworthiness personally to transact with so glorious a Majesty, acknowledging our inability to keep covenant with God, unless the Lord Jesus enable us thereto by his Spirit, with humble dependance on him for his gracious assistance, make and renew our covenant, with God and with one another, as follows:

"1. We give up ourselves, this day, to that God, whose name alone is Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, the only true and living God; and to our blessed Lord Jesus, as our only Redeemer and Saviour, Prophet, Priest, and King over our souls, and only Mediator of the covenant of grace; engaging our hearts to this God in Christ, by the help of his grace, to cleave unto him as our God and chief good, and unto Jesus Christ, as our Mediator by faith, in a way of gospel obedience, as becomes his covenant people forever; engaging by the help of Christ, to keep ourselves pure, especially from the sins of the times, and to observe the Lord's commands, in the exercise not only of publick worship, but of

private in our families, by prayer, and reading the scriptures, and in secret also, as God in his word doth require.

"2. We give up also our offspring unto God in Christ, avouching him to be our God and the God of our children, and ourselves with our children to be his people, humbly adoring his grace, that we and our children may be looked on as the Lord's; promising, by his help, as far as there shall be need, to be instructing, catechising, setting good patterns before them, and to be much in prayer for their conversion and salvation.

"3. We do also give up ourselves one to another in the Lord, according to the will of God, to walk together as a particular church of Christ, in all the ways of his worship and service, according to the rules of the word of God; promising, in brotherly love, to watch over one another's souls, and to submit ourselves to the discipline and government of Christ in this his church, and to the ministerial teaching, guidance, and oversight of the elder or elders thereof, and duly to attend the seals and censures, and whatever ordinances Christ hath commanded to be observed by his people, according to the order of the gospel, in such degrees of communion unto which we have attained, as far as the Lord hath or shall reveal unto us; desiring also to walk with all regular and due communion with other churches; for the observing of which, and all other duties, we desire to depend wholly on the grace of God in Christ Jesus to enable us thereto; and wherein we shall fail, we shall humbly wait upon his grace in Christ for pardon, acceptance, and healings, for his name's sake.—Amen."*

*"Samuel Cheever and his wife Ruth, Moses Maverick and his wife Eunice, Ambrose Gale, Richard Reith, William Bartoll and his wife Mary, George Bondfield, William Beal, Benjamin Parmiter, Edward Read, Francis Girdler, John Merritt and his wife Mary, Samuel Sandin and his wife Charity, Benjamin Gale and his wife Deliverance, John Stacy and his wife Agnes, John Seaward, Sarah Ward, Jane Pitman, Elizabeth Conant, Mary Dixey, Mary Merritt, Elizabeth Legg, Miriam Pedrick, Elizabeth Watts, Anna Symmes, Abigail Clarke, Sarah Henly, Sarah Buckly, Margaret Ellis, Joanna Hawley, Dorcas Pedrick, Sarah Dodd, Mary Fortune, Elizabeth Russel, Mary Ferguson, Miriam

Such, my hearers, are the sacred principles, and holy vows, thus admirably and affectingly expressed, on which this church of our blessed Redeemer was originally founded; and may it not be truly said, that it was "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." We have here a Confession and Covenant, worthy to be written in golden letters, worthy to be indelibly impressed on every memory, and on every heart. And let it never be forgotten, that these precious monuments of the faith and piety of our fathers, not having been removed or varied, are the basis, on which we professedly rest to this day.

A society, established by such men, on such principles, and with such a spirit, could scarcely fail to experience the smiles of the Almighty. It of course enjoyed a great degree of prosperity. The vine, which God's own right hand had thus manifestly planted, being watered with continual dews of heavenly grace, became fair, fruitful, and flourishing.

As soon as the church was organized, at a meeting for the adoption of rules respecting the due administration of the ordinances, among other things it was agreed—"That the pastor hath liberty to proceed, according to the seven propositions of the Synod in 1662, in their discourse concerning the subjects of baptism:"* and two years after, "on the mo-

Hanniford, Abigail Merret, Mary Rolls, Abigail Hinds, Charity Pitman, Elizabeth Glass, Mary Clattery, Jane Blackler, Rebecca Carder, Grace Coos, Mary Doliber, Alice Darby, Elizabeth Gatchell."

Mr. Moses Maverick appears to have been the most distinguished character in the place, from its settlement to this date, and to have died the next year. He was usually first on the list of the "townsmen," as they were then called, discharged the duties of Townclerk, and solemnized all the marriages till July 1685, when "the President and Council having authorized the several ministers of the several towns," that duty began to be performed by Mr. Cheever.

*"Proposition I. They that, according to scripture, are members of the visible church, are the subjects of baptism.

"Prop. II. The members of the visible church, according to scripture, are confederate visible believers, in particular churches, and their infant seed, that is, children in minority, whose next parents, one or both, are in covenant.

"Prop. V. Church members, who were admitted in minority, understanding the

tion and desire of some adult unbaptized persons, that the ordinance of baptism might be administered to them, though they dare not adventure to the Lord's table,—after agitation of the matter, the whole church came to the result, that such persons, submitting themselves to the examination of the elder, and he finding them qualified, as those in the Synod's *fifth* proposition, whose children have been hitherto baptized, and after standing propounded, no just exception in their life, such might be baptized themselves, and have the seal also applied to their children, upon monition to such parents, to keep up family worship and instruction in their houses; *the children of profane, ignorant, and scandalous parents, being hereby admitted to no such privilege, till those bars were regularly removed.*"

We may learn, from these extracts, the origin of what is called owning the covenant in this society; which, agreeably to the sanction of Synod, was generally practised by the churches, in the best days of New England. In our time, though there is some diversity of opinion among christians in regard to the *use*, it is impossible there should be any respecting the *abuse*, of this practice. In "the profane, ignorant, and scandalous," every reflecting person must be agreed, that it is a shocking profanation.

In great harmony and mutual affection, the society enjoyed the faithful labours of Mr. Cheever, till the twenty-ninth of May, 1724; when he was removed by death, at the advanced age of *eighty-five*, after he had been devoted to his people *fifty five* years; during the last *eight* of which, however, he was relieved by the assistance of a colleague.

Of this venerable man I have collected, from the discourse at his funeral by Mr. Barnard, entitled "Elijah's mantle,"

doctrine of faith, and publickly professing their assent thereto, not scandalous in life, and solemnly owning the covenant before the church, wherein they give up themselves and their children to the Lord, and subject themselves to the government of Christ in the church, their children are to be baptized."

and from other authentick documents, a few particulars, which are worthy of remembrance.

He was the son of Mr. Ezekiel Cheever, a celebrated schoolmaster,* and was born at New-Haven, on the twenty-second of September, 1639. He came to this place in 1668, and was soon the common father of the whole town, by means of the many temporal advantages they received from him. He went about doing good, serving the people in all their interests. He did not however forget, that preaching is peculiarly the minister's work; and for this he was remarkably fitted, as he had a thorough knowledge of the scriptures, which rendered him a most excellent textuary, and enabled him to carry in his head a complete body of divinity. In his publick discourses, he preserved the purity and simplicity of the gospel, and inculcated the unadulterated truth, as it is in Jesus. His great aim, was to shew his hearers their guilt and danger, and to point them to the only remedy, that they might be persuaded to flee from the wrath to come, and lay hold of the hope set before them in the gospel. As his object was to win souls to Christ, he took no pains to please the fancy, but delivered the mind of the Spirit with great plainness and cogency, not shunning to declare all the counsel of God. He was fervent and zealous, constant and assidious, in proclaiming the everlasting gospel to his beloved people. It is said, that for *forty-eight* years, he was never hindered from performing the duties of his office, a single sabbath.

When the infirmities of age at length compelled him to take leave of his stated ministerial exercises, in October

* This extraordinary man, who was the author of a famous Latin Accidence, and several religious publications, was born in London, January 25, 1615, came to this country in June 1637, was a grammar master at New-Haven 12, at Ipswich 11, at Charlestown 9, and at Boston 39 years, where he died in his 94th year. Dr. C. Mather, one of his pupils, observes—"He was as venerable a sight as the world, since the days of primitive christianity, has ever looked upon."

His second son, Thomas, pastor of the church at Rumney Marsh, now Chelsea, lived to be 93.

1719, he did it in a solemnly impressive discourse, from these words—"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." Yet we find, that a year afterwards, on a special occasion, he delivered a short but earnest exhortation, to be "zealous of good works." He was a man of a truly catholick spirit, of extensive, universal philanthropy; distinguished also as a peacemaker, never exciting or encouraging parties, excepting such as were engaged in the cause of God and religion. His conversation was both grave and pleasant. The whole tenour of his life evinced an entire submission to the disposing Providence of God, and acquiescence in it. His deportment was uniform, blameless, and exemplary.

We are told, that he never had a moment's indisposition in his life; yet he suffered in consequence of the decay of nature, and would often say to his colleague—"Age is too heavy for me, but I must bear it. I cannot die when I would. I must wait patiently God's time. My times are in his hands. I rejoice that he has provided for his people before I go. He has satisfied me with long life." His senses finally forsook him, and the lamp of life fairly burnt out; for he experienced neither pain nor sickness to the last, nor shewed the least symptom of either, even in his expiring moments. Thus, having been possessed of a comfortable hope, without any violent emotions of joy, he took his departure, and entered into eternal rest.*

* The Latin inscription over his grave, appears not to have been written with perfect accuracy, and in one passage is very enigmatical. The principal part of it may be thus rendered:—

"With this sod are covered the remains of Mr. Samuel Cheever, the Reverend Pastor of the first Church of our Lord Jesus Christ in Marblehead. At the time of his decease, though he had entered his 85th year, he possessed almost the vigour of youth, and scarcely appeared to have grown old. He discharged the pastoral duties toward the flock of the Great Shepherd, with the greatest integrity, diligence, and watchfulness, in love, benevolence, and affection, for 50 years; until spent with his labours, he was confined about four years to his dwelling, still zealously devoting himself to his studies and to prayer, while his people deeply lamented his loss, though it was so remarkably supplied. At length, his work being completed, he was summoned to receive his reward, on the 29th of May, 1724, and, with perfect resignation, without pain, with no disease but mere age, he departed, and sweetly slept in Jesus."

During the ministry of Mr. Cheever, after ordination till the settlement of his Colleague—a period of about *thirty-two* years—*forty-one* males and *an hundred and sixty* females were added to the church; *three hundred and forty-five* recognized the covenant; and *one thousand five hundred and fifty-seven* were baptized.

His successour, preached for the first time to this people, July eleventh, 1714. The church and town had concurred in a determination, to hear three candidates on trial, one of whom was to be elected assistant pastor. The candidates were Mr. *John Barnard*, Mr. *Edward Holyoke*, who became President of Harvard College in 1737; and Mr. *Amos Cheever*, son of the aged minister, afterwards settled in Manchester. When the church proceeded to a choice in December, and the town soon after, there was a majority of votes in both bodies for Mr. Barnard; who accordingly received a regular call, which he finally accepted, but was not ordained till the eighteenth of July, 1716. In the interval, a number of the minority withdrew, erected what is still called the New Meeting, and settled the Rev. Mr. Holyoke; on the morning of whose ordination, which was three months before that of Mr. Barnard, four male members of this church,* and twenty-four females, were dismissed to the new Society. It is also understood, that about this time, in the year 1714, the episcopal church was instituted; but I find no mention of it in our records.

When Mr. Barnard was inducted to office, by a council consisting of Dr. Cotton Mather, Dr. Colman, and other worthies of that day, this church, notwithstanding the establishment of the two other societies, was in a flourishing state, containing *twenty-seven* men and *ninety* women.

He, it may well be said, was a burning and shining light, in this golden candlestick; and, like his predecessor, was blessed with a long, happy, and useful ministry. He laboured in

*Samuel Stacey, Richard Trevett, Richard Skinner, and John Allen.

this part of the vineyard *fifty-five* years, and was greatly loved and revered. He was extensively known and honoured, for his learning and talents, his zeal for the faith once delivered to the saints, and the excellence of his christian walk and conversation. He departed this life, on the twenty-fourth of January, 1770, in his *eighty-ninth* year, after Mr. Whitwell had been settled with him *eight* years. His, doubtless, was the blessing of many who were ready to perish; and numerous souls, we have reason to think, will be the crown of his eternal rejoicing.

But a more circumstantial account of the life and character of one, whose memory is so precious, is probably expected; for most of the materials of which, I am indebted to the sermon delivered after his decease by Mr. Whitwell.

He was born in Boston, on the sixth of November, 1681, was devoted to the ministry from his birth, and, while at the university, is supposed to have experienced the reality and power of religion. Though he excelled in various branches of human learning, and was skilled in many of the arts, divinity was his favourite study. Having made a business of perusing authors of different sentiments, comparing them with the divine oracles, and forming his judgment by the standard of religious truth, he was led to embrace what is denominated the Calvinistick scheme, though he was careful to "call no man master on earth."

In the year 1707, he was appointed by Governor Dudley, one of the Chaplains of the army sent against Port-Royal, the duties of which appointment he performed; and in 1709, he embarked, in the same capacity, with Captain, afterwards Lieutenant Governor Wentworth, for Barbadoes and London. While in England, he became intimately acquainted with Doctor Oldfield, Mr. Fleming, Doctor Calamy, and other celebrated divines of the age, and received several advantageous proposals for settlement, but preferred his own country.

On his return, and after he had preached some time in this place, having been invited to settle with the old North Church and Society in his native town, he replied, that he felt himself under such obligations to the inhabitants of Marblehead, in consequence of their friendly treatment of him, that no prospect of worldly advantage should prevail with him to leave them.*—His first sermon was delivered here, as we have seen, in July, 1714, and his last on the eighth of January, 1769, about a year before his death,—a remarkable discourse, still remembered and often mentioned by many, on those words—"Let brotherly love continue."

From a manuscript of his, which has been in my possession, and which he entitled "The Preacher," containing the texts and dates of all his sermons, with other interesting notes, it appears that he preached about *seven thousand* times. This valuable volume, and the original copy of his version of the Psalms—used for a long time in this society—accompanied with recommendations from Doctor C. Mather, Dr. Byles, Dr. Cooper, and others, have been deposited in the archives of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

He was a man of extraordinary dignity, whose presence restrained every imprudent folly of youth, and when the aged saw him they paid him reverence. "During the latter part of his life, when he retained a vigour of mind and zeal uncommon at so advanced an age, he was regarded as the father of the churches. His form was remarkably erect, and he never bent under the infirmities of eighty-eight years. His countenance was grand, and his mein majestick." "He gave a spring to that commercial enterprize, which changed Marblehead from a fishing place to the second rank of any town in Massachusetts."—His character as a christian was irreproachable, and an ornament to his sacred profession. Very extensive were his charities and liberality; for which, as he was blessed with affluence, and had no children, he possessed both the means and the disposition. By his last will and

* Whether this statement, which agrees with that of his colleague, or a very different account of the matter, in Elliot's and Allen's Biographical Dictionaries, be entitled to most confidence, others must judge for themselves.

testament, he bequeathed a liberal donation, in books and money, to the College at which he was educated.*

As a minister of Jesus Christ, he appears to have been "thoroughly furnished unto all good works." It seemed to be the height of his ambition, that he might be enabled to promote the good of souls. The pulpit was his element; and he was often heard to say, that he should be willing to die there, in the service of God, and of those for whom Christ died. The apostacy and ruin of man, his recovery by the divine Saviour, and the necessity of faith, repentance, and holy obedience, in order to the possession and enjoyment of heavenly felicity, were his principal topicks;—in explaining which, he entered into the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, and most earnestly besought his hearers not to receive the grace of God in vain. In one of his printed discourses, when he was upwards of eighty years old, he addresses them in these affecting words—"I solemnly protest unto you, that if there should be any of you, which God forbid—who, after all

* "*Item*, I will and confirm the gift of the *books* I have already sent to Harvard College in Cambridge; and now, in thankfulness to God for the great mercy of my liberal education there, and sincerely desirous of the flourishing of that society in religion and good literature, I will and give unto the said College, after my wife's decease, the sum of *two hundred pounds*, lawful money, to be paid by my Executors into the hands of the Treasurer of the said College for the time being, to be improved for the benefit of the said College at the discretion of the President and Fellows of the said Society, for the time being;—and my desire is, that if the above named *John Barnard Swett*, who is now a student of said College, should, after being graduated there, be inclined to apply himself to his studies and reside at the College, and the said two hundred pounds should be received by the Treasurer, he, the said *John Barnard Swett*, may have the benefit of the income thereof for three years; after which it shall be improved as above without any incumbrance."

"*Item*, having some years ago, given a *silver flagon*, for the use of the communion table, to the first Church of Christ in said Marblehead, of which, through divine patience, I have been many years an unworthy pastor, which I hereby ratify and confirm, I do now further will and give unto the said church forever, for the special use of the ministry forever, my *piece of marsh* or meadow land, adjoining to land of Nathan Bowen Esquire, which the Commoners gave me, situate in said Marblehead."

May I be excused for adding, that *Mercy Turner*, of Boston, who is mentioned in another article, as one of the children of the testator's brother James Barnard, was my maternal grandmother.

the pains that have been taken with you, to instruct and counsel and warn you, shall be found at the last to have refused to believe the report of the gospel, to receive Jesus Christ the Lord into your hearts by faith, and live in obedience to him, *I am free from the blood of all men; your blood be upon your own heads!*"

A little before his death, he observed that he had reason to believe he had dedicated himself to God in truth while he was young, and had served him with sincerity in the ministry; but "I have been guilty," said he, "of many breaches of my vows." Then, with tears flowing from his eyes, and with a faltering voice, he added, "my very soul bleeds when I remember my sins: but I trust I have sincerely repented, and that I shall be accepted for Christ's sake. His righteousness is my only dependence. Assurance of salvation is what have not attained to; but I have a strong hope of being happy forever."

This learned and good man, "though dead, yet speaketh," particularly to the people he so ardently loved, in his numerous publications, many of which are very valuable; particularly, his "Confirmation of the Christian Religion;" his volume on "The Imperfection of the Creature;" that called "Janua Cœlestis;" his sermon on "The Extent of the Divine Law," and another on "The true Divinity of Jesus Christ."* Beside these, he published nineteen separate discourses on different subjects.

* From the conclusion of this sermon, which was delivered at the Thursday Lecture in Boston, when the author was *eighty* years old, the following quotation will, I doubt not, be interesting to many.

"Suffer me, seeing it hath pleased a merciful God to spare me to a great old age, to spend some of my latest breaths, in asserting and vindicating the honour of our common Saviour, by improving this last opportunity I can ever expect, of standing in this place and upon such an occasion, to address myself, with great humility and all due respects, particularly to my younger brethren in the ministry, and to the candidates therefor."—Dearly beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ, "let it be your great care, firstly to get your own hearts firmly established in the faith of this vital principle of the christian religion, and then to instruct the souls that may be under your charge, and confirm them in the belief, that our Lord Jesus Christ

During the ministry of Mr. Barnard, *ninety-four* males and *three hundred and ten females* were added to the church; *six hundred and forty-one* recognized the covenant; and *three thousand four hundred and fifty-nine* were baptized.

I have been thus particular, respecting the two first pastors, because the information here embodied, being of ancient date, is by no means generally possessed, and would soon sink into oblivion, were no pains taken to preserve it. Little comparatively need be offered, concerning persons, and events, posterior to the removal of Mr. Barnard, since with what is more recent you are already acquainted.

The reverend William Whitwell, received ordination as Colleague, on the twenty-fifth of August, 1762; and continu-

is the true God.—Remember, my brethren, you owe this in fidelity to your Lord, and in love to the souls of his and your people.

"*You owe it in fidelity to your Lord* and master, both your Lord and ours. For if, through an affectation of being thought deeply studied in philosophy, you should insinuate in your conversation, or publickly teach your people, otherwise than this wholesome doctrine of sound words, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, is the true God, would you not degrade him from his throne of glory, strip him of his peculiar honours, and number him, who is higher than all the angelick orders, in the rank of beings, the most exalted and refined of which is infinitely below the Deity—and thereby cast the highest contempt and indignity upon him? Would not such a treatment of the incarnate Son of God, expose you to the danger of being found among those teachers, of whom Peter says, they "bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them:" or Jude's "ungodly men, before of old ordained to condemnation, who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ?" Where, by the way, I observe, that the article, in the Greek, placed before the "only Lord God," without any before "our Lord Jesus Christ," evidently sheweth (for the reason before mentioned) that it is one and the same subject that is spoken of "the only Lord God," and "our Lord Jesus Christ."

"*And you owe it in love to the precious souls of his and your people*, who are put under your particular care. For if, by an unmanly sneer at the great doctrine of the true divinity of Christ, or by laboured and sophistical periods, you should teach them any thing herein, that is contrary to the sound doctrine of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, will you not be guilty of leading them into gross error; of teaching them to believe in and worship a creature instead of the only true God, and so blindly conduct them into abominable idolatry? Will you not herein direct them to build all their hopes of salvation on a sandy foundation, which, in the time of trial, will prove ruinous and destructive to their immortal souls; and if the blood of souls should at last be found to lie at your doors, what the consequence of this will prove unto yourselves, you are able to judge."

ed, it is believed, in the conscientious, humble, and faithful discharge of the important duties of his office, delivering the true gospel, and watching for souls as one who expected to give an account, devoted to the best interests of his people, and highly esteemed and beloved by them, till the eighth of November, 1781; when it pleased the great Head of the Church to translate him to a better world, in the midst of his days and usefulness, in the *forty-fifth* year of his age, and *twentieth* of his ministry. A tribute is paid to his worth, by Mr. Stone, in his sermon at the ordination of Mr. Hubbard. "Our dearly beloved brother Whitwell," he says, "though snatched away in the prime of life, acquired and maintained a most amiable character. He was the gentleman and the christian happily united. He was a well instructed scribe, concise, pertinent, enlightening, and moving in his addresses on all occasions." Much more doubtless might be said of his excellence, as a man and as a minister. His printed sermon to mariners, occasioned by the loss of a large number of vessels, in the year 1769, is truly affecting and impressive.

During his ministry, *twelve* males and *sixty-seven* females were added to the church; *two hundred and sixty-five* recognized; and *one thousand and eighty-two* were baptized.

His successour, the reverend Ebenezer Hubbard, of whom most of you had some personal knowledge, was inducted to office on the first of January, 1783; and, having remained in it less than *eighteen* years, was suddenly removed, on the fifteenth of October, 1800, in the *forty-third* year of his age.—So that the two last mentioned ministers were in office only *thirty-seven* years, a little more than two-thirds as long as either of their predecessors;—a solemn *memento* to those who come after them.

During the ministry of Mr. Hubbard, *twenty-one* males and *eighty-one* females were added to the church; *two hundred and six* recognized; and *one thousand and thirty-one* were baptized.

At my ordination, October seventh, 1801, the church consisted of *ten* men and *eighty-one* women. Since that time, *sixteen* males and *seventy-seven* females have been added; *one hundred and thirty-three* have recognized; and *eight hundred and forty-two* have been baptized. The church now consists of *fifteen* males and *one hundred and three* females; several of whom, however, are not at present residing among us.*

It is a remarkable fact, that each of the two first ordained ministers of this society continued in its service, from the commencement of his labours, about *fifty-five years*, and that each of them had the aid of a colleague *eight years;* thus from the beginning of Mr. Cheever's preaching in 1668, to the death of Mr. Barnard in 1770, is a period of *one hundred and two years;* an instance seldom equalled, it is presumed, in the ecclesiastical history of this or indeed of any other country.—It is now *one hundred and thirty-one* years since the church was organized; in which time it has been destitute of a pastor but *a little more than two years.* The four who have preceded me, died in office, and are buried among you.† During the whole period, *nine hundred and thirty-three* persons,—namely, *one hundred and ninety-nine* males and *seven hundred and thirty-four* females have been members of the church; *one thousand five hundred and ninety* have recognized; and *seven thousand nine hundred and seventy-one* have been baptized.—

There have been, in all that time, but *sixteen* deacons;‡ though formerly it was usual to have three in office at once.

* It will be observed, that it was not within the design of this discourse to dwell on recent events, particularly such as have occurred since the settlement of the preacher. Grateful mention would, otherwise, have been made, of the *special religious attention*, with which the society was graciously visited in 1810, at which period *thirty-four* of its members became professors of christianity.

† Mr. Cheever became a graduate of Harvard College in 1659; Mr. Barnard in 1709; Mr. Whitwell, a native of Boston, and graduate of New Jersey in 1758, was admitted *ad eundem* at Harvard in 1762; Mr. Hubbard, a native of Concord, (Mass.) became a graduate of Harvard in 1777.

‡ Ambrose Gale, Richard Reith, John Stacy, John Merritt, John Dixey, Richard Skinner, John White, John Bayley, Benjamin Hendly, Joshua Orne, William Gale, Stephen Phillips, Benjamin Stacey, William Williams, *John Goodwin, Nathan Bowen.*

The two last, who were elected together, have officiated more than twenty-eight years; and it is devoutly hoped, that they may still be continued many years.

It would be gratifying, to have a complete history of this ancient *building*, so venerable as the seat of worship to your fathers, through so many generations. I will give what information I have been able, after considerable research, to collect respecting it. In the records of the town, we find it ordered, in 1648, "that the rate for the *meeting house* should be gathered." It is understood to have been originally placed, on the hill now improved as a burial ground, near the spot where the ministers are interred. In 1659, "at a general town meeting it was agreed, that the meeting house should be *seated*," and a person was employed "to complete the work for nineteen pounds." In the following year, a committee was appointed "for the placing and seating of *all* the inhabitants of the town, both men and women, in the meeting house." Thus every individual had his seat, and there is reason to believe that every one's seat was occupied with great constancy. The tradition is probably well founded, that at this early period, the men thought it necessary to carry their arms to meeting with them, and to have sentinels during divine service, on account of the danger apprehended from the Indians.* In 1662 "it was determined, that a gallery should be built, at the South West end of the meeting house, sufficient for four seats, which seats were to be completed, the front seats with columns, and a board at the bottom to keep the dust from com-

* "Some of the ancient planters have told us, that the Indians, being possessed with fears lest the English should in time take their country from them, did early conspire to destroy them; and the small handful of christians then at Salem, were alarmed with the report of no less than a thousand barbarous natives coming to cut them off, and that upon a Lord's day: whereupon they discharged several great guns, loaden with small shot, which made such a terrible rattling among the trees afar off, that the amazed Indians returned without putting their bloody design in execution."— [*Dr. I. Mather's Relation of Indian Troubles.*]

ing down, and to be arched sufficient to strengthen the house;" and, after several years, measures were adopted for erecting "a gallery at the North East end, with five seats, stairs, and all other necessaries, as the other gallery then was." At the same time a person was employed, "to look after the meeting house, and to *ring the bell*, and to officiate about that work, for which he was to have four pounds by the year." In 1672, "it was ordered by general consent, that a *Lentoo** should be built, adjoining to the backside of the meeting house, twelve foot in breadth, forty foot in length, with three gable ends in the same of timber work." Persons, the next year, were empowered "to *seat* the Lentoo men and women in their seats, put an alley through the old part, dispose of any that should want seats, or lose their seats by means of the alley, in the most convenient places in the old or new part, and rectify any disorders with due care, that such as had been formerly seated might keep their places as many of them as conveniently could."—The records of the town are imperfect; and I have been unable to determine, with precision, the period when the house, thus repeatedly enlarged and improved, was transferred to this spot. It is rendered pretty certain, however, by information obtained of the oldest person in town, that it must have been removed a little more than *an hundred* years since, not long before the settlement of father Barnard. If, as is generally supposed, some of the original part remains, it must be *an hundred and sixty-seven* years old. At any rate, it is probably the oldest publick building in New England. That we may live to see it rebuilt, and to see the ways of Zion rejoicing in it, as in "the days of old," and "the years of the right hand of the Most High," is among my most fervent wishes and prayers.

I shall now conclude with some brief reflections; and regret that the time will not admit of a more enlarged improvement.

* See, in Pickering's Vocabulary, the word *linto*, or *leanto*, defined by Mason—"a low shallow building joined to a higher."

We have reason, in the first place, gratefully to acknowledge—"*Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*" Having survived repeated periods of uncommon trial and difficulty, the church and society exist, and it is humbly hoped, that the God of our fathers has not yet utterly forsaken us. Contemplating our whole history, it is evident, that as much general prosperity has been here enjoyed, as has been usual in the country, and a very unusual degree of harmony, peace, and brotherly affection. No uneasiness has ever arisen, which required the aid of a council; but the ecclesiastical and parochial concerns of the society have invariably been conducted with wonderful unanimity. The ministers and their people have lived and died together in love, and appear to have manifested to each other an affectionate, accommodating spirit. We ought to rejoice, with thankfulness, in view of these and many other tokens of the divine benignity, that have been experienced; especially, in the thought, that multitudes in all probability have here been prepared for glory, and that this candlestick has not yet been removed. May it be continued in its place, so long as the sun and moon shall endure!

Secondly, we ought never to lose sight of the *foundation*, on which this church is established, nor the puritanical, exemplary faith and piety of its founders. It is certainly a distinguished honour to be the descendants and successours of such men. The principles, on which they provided for the worship and ordinances of God, were derived immediately from the oracles of truth, and are of perpetual, everlasting importance. The divinity of the reformation, was the divinity they embraced, in which they lived and died, and which—thanks to their faithful care—is the basis on which we now professedly rest. "It is called Calvinism, but injuriously. It has been the divinity of the church of Christ in all ages. It is the divinity of Saint Paul, and of Saint Paul's Master, who met him in the way to Damascus."* It includes the doctrines of grace,

* Cowper's Letters.

"doctrines according to godliness," the doctrines which make genuine, thorough christians, and prepare sinners for glory. These are the root of the goodly tree of holy living. It was the faith of our fathers, "the faith once delivered unto the saints," which rendered them so eminently pure and upright; and, in proportion as the proper influence of the same precious faith has been and shall be extended, undefiled religion and true morality have been revived and will ever flourish.

Thirdly, it concerns us to be sensible of our melancholy *declensions*, and deeply to lament them before God. In many respects, it is certain that we are degenerated as a society. We have, at this time, less *outward* prosperity, than has been formerly enjoyed. This doubtless is owing, in a great measure, to the long continued series of public distresses, which have probably been heavier on this people than on any other in the land;—and in some degree, perhaps, to the springing up of sects and denominations, of which our fathers had no knowledge. But, after all, is it not owing still more, to the want of that *publick spirit*, that ardour, and interest, in regard to the maintenance of the gospel and its ordinances, for which the great body of the community in former years were distinguished? The decline of *spiritual* prosperity is the main difficulty, and this, more than any thing else, is to be deprecated. There are aged persons still living among us, who remember when this temple of the Most High was literally thronged with devout worshippers, and attentive hearers, every sabbath. If the same spirit were now prevalent, since numbers are not wanting, it would be so still. Look back, my hearers, to the time, when every inhabitant of this town had his particular appropriate seat; and then view the multitudes in our day, who have either no place at all in the house of God, which they can call their own, or, at least, are extremely inconstant in their attendance there. How many of our young people, of both sexes, encouraged by the example of their elders, waste and profane holy time in the most dreadful manner, and are scarcely ever to be seen in a place of worship.

unless it may be occasionally, by night, for amusement, or even for disorderly purposes. As an attendant, or direct consequence, of such a state of things, how much irreligion, impiety, and iniquity of various descriptions, is continually practiced by those, whose ancestors humbly walked with God, in a careful, conscientious observance of all his commandments and ordinances. While it is thus with a large proportion of the present generation, and while false opinions and views, respecting the nature of religion, have an alarming prevalence, where is that activity, zeal, and exemplariness of professed christians, by which they were once, and should be always, characterized? These things, my friends, I trust you will receive with meekness, for they are uttered in the fulness of my heart, with an unfeigned solicitude for your best welfare for both worlds.

Finally, permit me, then, in the same spirit, to *exhort* you, solemnly and with earnestness, to feel the duty and importance of making resolute exertions, not only for the preservation and support of the gospel, but also for the revival and increase of vital religion among us, in its primitive power and purity.—It is ardently to be wished, that all the influential members of the society, would be impressed with their obligations faithfully to consult its interest, and would be willing to be at some cost and pains to promote it. No labour, no expence, will be likely to yield sincerer satisfaction, in the last hours of life, than what is devoted to such a cause.—I would particularly conjure you, my beloved people, "*not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together;*" but to strengthen and encourage him, who is "your servant for Jesus' sake," by a regular, diligent attendance on his humble ministrations. In the numerous, disheartening trials, to which he is subjected, he needs, he greatly needs your countenance and your prayers. The early removal of his immediate predecessors, loudly admonishes him how soon *he* may be called to give an account of his ministry: and suffer me to remind you, how speedily *you* too may be required, to render account how you

have received it. Entreat, therefore, for him, that he may be made faithful, and for yourselves, that you may entertain the gospel by him dispensed, though it be in much weakness, as a message from the living God.—"Brethren, the time is short." "Our fathers, where are they; and the prophets, do they live forever?" Another year has been recently "numbered with the years beyond the flood;" in the course of which, *thirty four* of this society, have entered the eternal world.* Within a very few days, also, two worthy members of this church, beside a valuable young man† and a little boy, have "gone the way of all the earth," What is done must be done quickly. —Let it be our united, fervent supplication—"*Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old.*"‡ Let us pray and strive together, that the Lord would "*raise up the tabernacle that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof, that he would raise up its ruins and build it as in the days of old.*"§ "*Thus saith the Lord, stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.*"‖ The Almighty King of Zion is addressing us, as he addressed the church of Ephesus—"*I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else, I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*"¶ Listen, I beseech you, to this solemn admonition. Steadily adhere to the truth and way of God, in opposition to that general inclination to apostacy, in principle and practice, which

* 21 males and 13 females: 1 at the age of 95; 3 between 80 and 90; 6 between 70 and 80; 6 between 40 and 70; 9 between 20 and 40; 5 between 10 and 20; 1 at 6, and only 3 under that age. Of this number, 7 were lost or died abroad, and 5 belonged to the church.

† Mrs. Ruth Knight, the respectable relict of Mr. William K. Æ. 73. Mrs. Elisabeth wife of Mr. Joseph Stephens, who died in the triumphs of faith. Æ. 44. And Mr. Samuel Swett jun. greatly lamented. Æ. 29.

‡ Isa. li, 9. § Amos ix, 11. ‖ Jer. vi, 16. ¶ Rev. ii, 5.

and embrace the glori-
nal peculiarities, and estee.. very highly all the sa-
institutions and requirements, of the gospel of Christ.
the great and good work of reformation, be immediately
and resolutely commenced, with a humble dependance on the
power of divine grace, in every heart, in every family.—
Moreover, "*let brotherly love continue,*" and be increased, by
our always "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in
the bond of peace;"—and Oh! may the Holy Ghost be sent
down from heaven, to warm our cold bosoms, to inspire us
with due zeal in the worship and service of our divine Master,
and cause us to grow and flourish, "like the cedars of Leba-
non." AMEN.

(Dec., 1888, 20,000)

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